



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Nature Tourism is the FASTEST growing segment of the tourism industry in the U.S.

Come find out what attractions will draw visitors from across the country and around the world to the rolling hills and farmlands of Virginia!

**WHAT:** Dedication ceremony for the Piedmont Phase of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail and the Celebration of the completion of the first statewide birding and wildlife trail in the United States

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 30, 2004, at 9:30 A.M.

**LOCATION:** Kemper Park, Monticello-Saunders Trail, Charlottesville, Virginia (see directions below).

This is the official dedication ceremony opening the Piedmont Phase of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife. **The event offers excellent scenic photo opportunities.**

**There will be an opportunity to interview biologists with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail partners and national experts.**

The event will occur outdoors; please dress appropriately to ensure your comfort.

Press kits will be distributed at the dedication ceremony or may be obtained upon request.

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# **Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail**

## **BACKGROUND:**

- Over the past 20 years, participation in wildlife viewing, particularly bird watching, has increased nationally more than 266% (388% in the South), with one in every three Americans enjoying this recreational pastime in 2002.
- Annual expenditures on wildlife viewing approached nearly \$40 billion nationally in 2001. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries initiated the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail to provide increased opportunities for Virginians and visitors to enjoy the Commonwealth's rich and diverse wildlife resources.
- The Trail is a driving trail, with loops off of the main trail linking together proximate sites. Now complete, the Department has 665 sites developed into 65 loops statewide.
- There are more than 500 partnering agencies, organizations and businesses participating in the development of the Trail.
- The first phase of the Trail (in coastal Virginia) was opened in October 2002 and has received considerable state, regional, and national attention.
- The Mountain phase was dedicated in September 2003 sites and has 310 sites organized into 34 driving loops throughout western Virginia.
- The Piedmont phase will include 117 sites on 13 loops across central Virginia.
- The Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail provides an excellent venue for educating Virginians and visitors about the Commonwealth's wildlife resources and supporting local economic development.

# *Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail*

## *Piedmont Dedication*

### Directions & Additional Information

The Piedmont Dedication will be held at Kemper Park, near the intersection of State Routes 20 and 53.

#### **Directions:**

From Interstate 64, take exit #121 and turn onto State Route 20 South. Just after the first stoplight, turn left on State Route 53, the Thomas Jefferson Parkway. Kemper Park is a short distance on your right. Parking will be along both sides of the Thomas Jefferson Parkway at Kemper Park.

The Dedication this year will take place outside, so please dress comfortably. Seating will be on the lawn at Kemper Park. If you have blankets or folding chairs you would like to bring, you are encouraged to do so.

